

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GABORO 00600 040552Z POSS DUPE
ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1709
INFO AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 0600

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB BC
SUBJ: AALC IN BOTSWANA

REF: SLEZAK MEMORANDUM, 2/7/78

1. EMBASSY CONSIDERS THAT AALC PROGRAM ACTIVITIES, WITH THEIR EMPHASIS ON VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND LABOR EDUCATION, ARE PARTICULARLY APPROPRIATE IN A COUNTRY LIKE BOTSWANA WHERE THE LABOR MOVEMENT AND, PARTICULARLY, ITS NATIONAL FEDERATION ARE NOT MUCH BEYOND THE GERMINAL STAGE. AS BANKERS' UNION GENERAL SECRETARY THAODI REMARKED TO US ON MARCH 3, THE AALC WAS DOING "ONE HELL OF A FINE JOB" IN BOTSWANA. BASED ON REMARKS SUCH AS THIS AND COMPLIMENTARY REMARKS RECEIVED BY PAT O'FARRELL DURING HIS BOTSWANA VISIT (SEE GABORONE MEMCON OF OCT 5, 1977), EMBASSY SEES AALC RELATIONS WITH HOST TRADE UNIONS AND GOVERNMENT AS HIGHLY SATISFACTORY.

2. ON THE OTHER HAND, AS DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT HERE IS GOING THROUGH SERIOUS IDEOLOGICAL GROWING PAINS, GIVEN THE EFFORTS OF SOME KEY PEOPLE (SUPPORTED BY THE FREDRICH EBERT FOUNDATION AND THE ICFTU) TO POLITICIZE THAT WHICH BEGAN AS A NON-POLITICAL MOVEMENT. WE FEEL AALC REPS ARE TAKING APPROPRIATE STEPS TO OPPOSE THESE DEVELOPMENTS AND, WE FEEL, ARE CAREFUL AT THE SAME TIME NOT TO COMMIT
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BLUNDER OF RAISING TOO HIGH AN AALC PROFILE WHICH WOULD ONLY ANTAGONIZE THE PROUD AND SENSITIVE BATSWANA (A BLUNDER OFTEN COMMITTED BY FREDRICH EBERT AND THE ICFTU). NEVERTHELESS, BECAUSE OF THIS UNCERTAIN SITUATION IN BOTSWANA'S LABOR MOVEMENT, WE DO BELIEVE IT WOULD BE A WISE MOVE FOR THE AALC TO SEND A FULL-TIME REP TO LESOTHO SO THAT WALT SMITH, THE REGIONAL AALC REP LOCATED HERE, CAN DEVOTE HIS FULL TIME AND ENERGIES

TO BOTSWANA. AT PRESENT SMITH SPENDS ABOUT 25 PERCENT OF HIS TIME IN LESOTHO.

3. IN ADDITION, WE BELIEVE AALC-EMBASSY RELATIONS, WHICH ARE ALREADY EXCELLENT, CAN BE STRENGTHENED AND WE ARE ENDEAVORING TO GIVE AALC REPS, FOR THE GUIDANCE THEY HAVE REQUESTED, MORE INFORMATION THAN HERETOFORE ON U.S. POLICIES AND INTERESTS REGARDING BOTSWANA AND SOUTHERN AFRICA. PRESUMABLY THIS WOULD HELP PREVENT DEVELOPMENTS SUCH AS THOSE WHICH ATTENDED THE 1975 STRIKE AT SELEBI-PIKWE, I.E. THERE IS A GENERAL FEELING THAT AT THE TIME THE AALC DID VERY LITTLE, VERY LATE AND VERY BADLY PARTLY BECAUSE OF A GENERAL UNAWARENESS THAT THE U.S. HAD A GREAT COMMERCIAL INTEREST IN THE SUCCESS OF THE PROJECT. SIMILARLY, SMITH FEELS HE IS NOT INFORMED ENOUGH OF GENERAL U.S. POLICIES TOWARD RHODESIA AND SOUTH AFRICA, TWO PROBLEM AREAS WHICH INTRUDE DAILY INTO HIS OWN WORK. THE EMBASSY WILL ENDEAVOR TO SEE THAT SMITH RECEIVES THE INFORMATION HE NEEDS. ALBERTI

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